

News Release

For immediate release

March 1, 2016

HCA accepting comments on potential health technology topics

Public comments accepted through March 11

OLYMPIA – The Health Care Authority (HCA) is proposing review of six technology topics and re-review of one topic by its Health Technology Assessment (HTA) program. The public can comment on the proposed technologies until 5 p.m. on March 11 by emailing shtap@hca.wa.gov.

The Legislature created the HTA program to review health care technologies with evidence-based criteria, making sure that they are safe and effective, and that they offer a significant benefit before recommending their use to state health care programs including Apple Health (Medicaid), the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program, and the Department of Labor and Industries workers' compensation program.

New technologies proposed for review include:

- **Extracorporeal shock wave therapy for musculoskeletal conditions (ESWT):** A noninvasive treatment based on ultrasound technology. ESWT for soft tissue injuries is applied with the goal of promoting healing. ESWT may have multiple effects thought to impact healing, including breaking calcium deposits and causing an inflammatory response that may stimulate tissue healing.
- **Non-pharmacologic treatments for migraines/headaches:** Includes Botox injections, transcranial magnetic stimulation, nerve destruction, acupuncture and massage. The topic is proposed to determine the safety, efficacy, and value of non-drug treatments for migraines and other headaches types.
- **Left atrial appendage closure device:** The left atrial appendage (LAA) is a normal part of the human heart connected to the left atrium (one of the four chambers of the heart). For some people with atrial fibrillation (an arrhythmia), the LAA can be a source of blood clots, which can interfere with blood flow to the brain and cause a stroke. In 2015, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a surgically implantable LAA closure device, a mechanical device designed to block off the LAA to reduce the likelihood of blood clots leading to stroke.
- **Varicose veins:** Various treatments for varicose veins are available. Treatment goals include reducing pain or discomfort, and reducing visibility for cosmetic reasons. The topics are identified based on uncertainties related to the safety, efficacy, and value of certain procedures including chemical ablation, stab phlebectomy, and laser ablation.
- **Skin substitutes:** Various skin substitute products are available for treatment of complex and/or non-healing wounds. The level of evidence available varies for different products, and the safety, efficacy and value of the products are uncertain. The reason for proposing this topic is to identify and review the available evidence to determine coverage for products that are demonstrated to be safe and effective for treatment of wounds.

- **Computer-aided detection mammogram:** Computer-aided detection (CAD) and diagnosis for mammography is an adjunct to traditional reading of images by radiologists. CAD technology has developed to improve early detection of disease, thus reducing breast cancer deaths. Evidence addressing the utility of CAD for mammography will be reviewed to determine coverage for CAD as an adjunct to mammography screening and diagnosis.

In addition, one health technology previously reviewed by HTA have been determined to have new evidence that may change the previous coverage decision:

- **Artificial disks (cervical and lumbar):** New indications and literature are available that merit re-review.

HCA contracts with an independent entity to produce scientific, evidence-based reports on the selected health technologies. A clinical committee reviews the reports to determine whether state-purchased health care should pay for the technology.

After this public comment period closes, HCA Director Dorothy Frost Teeter will make a final selection of health technologies to be reviewed or re-reviewed, in consultation with participating agencies and the Health Technology Clinical Committee.

More information about the HTA Program: www.hca.wa.gov/hta.

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About Washington State Health Care Authority

HCA is the state's top health care purchaser, covering more than 2 million Washington residents through Apple Health (Medicaid) and the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) Program. We work with partners to help ensure Washingtonians have access to better health and better care at a lower cost. For more information, visit www.hca.wa.gov.

Please do not reply directly to this message. If you have feedback or questions, please visit the [HCA website](#) for contact information.